

Refuel

*God's delight
in me*

SAT 25TH NOV
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Am. Significant?

Phil Watson

Come to our seminar on:

True Calling

Seminar Outline

- Introduction
- What do we mean by significance?
- Why does it matter?
- Two bases of our identity
- Discovering our special contribution



Welcome & Introduction

- Why did you choose this seminar?
- What does 'significance' mean to you? Why does it matter?
- We'll talk about TWO bases of our identity – secular or biblical views
- Discovering our specific contributions

Why does significance matter?

A foundation of our identity:

- Achievement
- Significance
- Sustenance
- Acceptance



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Significance is one of four foundation blocks to our identity:

- Achievements,
- Significance,
- Sustenance,
- Acceptance.

Significance answers questions of our purpose, the reason for being here and affects our value and self-esteem.

There are usually two foci: Who am I? Who do I want to be?

Significance plays into our sense of worth and wellbeing, impacting our levels of stress and anxiety. It's foundational to our emotional stability and resilience in the face of the usual struggles and challenges in life.

Building a Secular Identity

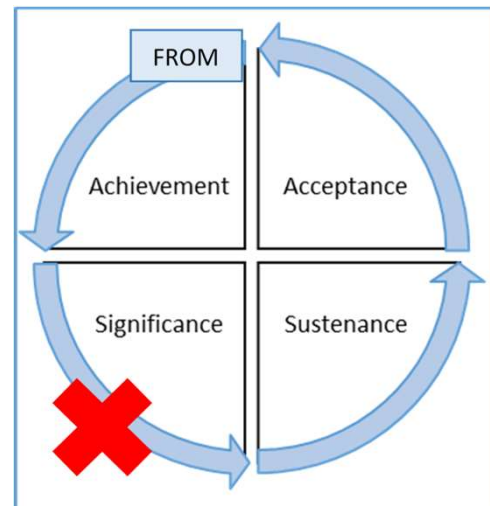
Cycle of Works/Worldview Cycle

- Our **achievements** give...
- ...a sense of **significance**.
- This **sustains** us...
- ...and success helps us feel **accepted**.

BUT...



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Adapted from Lake & Brunner,
Love Life-Giving Water

Psychiatrist Frank Lake & theologian Emil Brunner developed their understanding about identity from working with Indian missionaries in burnout. They noted a distinct contrast between how a secular culture and the Bible view these four foundation blocks. They described two cycles: the cycle of works (worldview) and a dynamic cycle of grace.

In the Worldview Cycle/ Cycle of works

- You start by **achieving**
- Which gives you a sense of **significance**
- Which in turn **sustains** you.
- If you succeed through all your efforts, you might have a chance to feel **accepted**.

BUT this is a false sense of security because life is NOT without struggles; this sets you up for guaranteed failure at some point. This is NOT sustainable and often difficult; because failures or errors bring pressure and stress, lead to anxiety, even burnout. This was my experience in early medical training.

Building a Biblical Identity

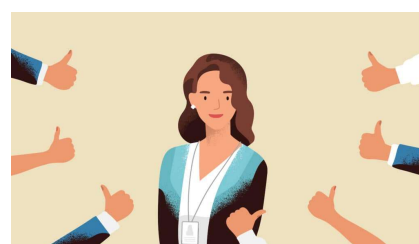
Chosen, Accepted by God

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last...”
John 15:16

“...as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved...”

Colossians 3:12

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
Ephesians 2:10



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Scripture tells us that believers are chosen and accepted by God. What verses could you suggest that show this?

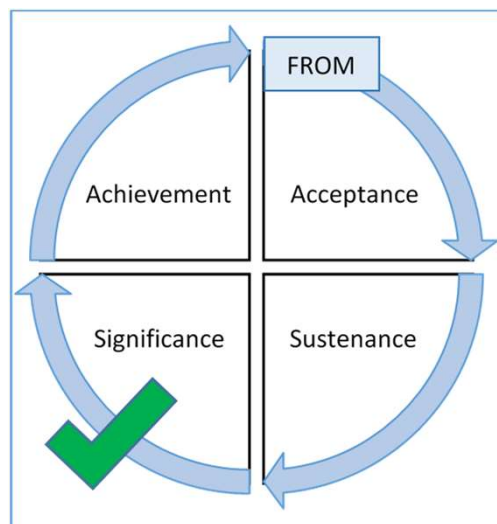
For example...

- John 15:16
- Colossians 3:12
- Ephesians 2:10
- Psalm 139:13-16.

Building a Biblical Identity

Cycle of Grace

- **Acceptance** by grace is the basis for our...
- ...relationship with God and **sustains** us.
- Our **significance** comes from our stable identity and worth in Christ, as his children.
- Our actions and **achievements** flow from that identity.



Adapted from Lake & Brunner, *Love Life-Giving Water*

Lake & Brunner's alternative base for our identity is acceptance and the Cycle of Grace

- The Biblical cycle starts with **Acceptance**. Because of Jesus' work, God loves us and adopted us as His children – we BELONG to Him and to each other.
- **Sustenance** – is compared to maintaining the spiritual input; Jesus was continuously sustained through the Father and the Holy Spirit. God is our Preserver, our Protector and Provider. . John 3:34 (NLT); John 5:20 (NLT); John 10:30 (NLT). Jesus repeatedly sought the Father in prayer, Mark 1:35. So, this is the root of our well-being.
- **Significance** – is where we can find our identity, our value and worth in Christ. However, we feel, each of us matter to God
- **Achievements** – this is the stage where we start to serve God. We know that we are cherished by God; He knows our needs and He is with us everywhere we go. We give back to Him out of our God-given abundance.

If we fail, feel rejected or abandoned we can always go back to Jesus.

Two Foundations of Identity

Two builders... Matthew 7: 24-27

What helps you immerse yourselves in God's grace? What helps you to build on the rock?

- Prayer
- Scripture
- Corporate Worship
- Friendships
- Fellowship (being with other believers)
- Creation/Nature



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These two alternative bases remind me of Jesus' story of two builders – Matthew 7:24-27

The worldview cycle = sand; cf. acceptance and the cycle of Grace = rock.

So some key questions are:

- What helps us recognise that we are accepted by God?
- What helps you immerse yourself in God's grace?
- What helps you build on the rock?

e.g. Prayer, Scripture, Corporate worship, fellowship, friendship, creation/nature, etc.

What God Wants of Us?



Our Shared Calling: What we are all meant to be like and to do?

- Commandments – Mark 12:28-31; John 13:34-35
- Great Commission – Matthew 28: 16-20; Mark 16:15
- Be witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension - Luke 24:48
- Become more like Christ – Philippians 2:12-16a, (also Phil 1:5-6)
- Do good works, fulfil God's purposes – Ephesians 2:10, 4:12; Philippians 2:13
- Different but unified – part of ONE body – 1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 3:15

My Specific Calling: What am I meant to do? What is my contribution?



What God wants of ALL believers: to be and to do: - our **shared** calling. Can you suggest some key verses?

- Great commandments – Mark 12:28-31; John 13:34-35
- Great commission – Matthew 28: 16-20; Mark 16:15
- Witnesses - Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8
- More Christlike - Phil 2:12-16a; (Phil 1:5-6)
- Good works – Colossians 1:10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Play our part but in unity – like parts of a body – Ephesians 4:16 NLT

BUT what about our **specific** contribution?

Discerning Our Contribution: Examples

Who?	Reference	How?
Saul (Paul)	Acts 9:1-7 & 15; Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:8	



There are plenty of examples in Scripture that we could look at but we're limited for today.

I'd like to encourage you to reflect on Paul's experience.

I know his encounter with Jesus is NOT typical but still, there are some insights we can consider...

Timeline – Paul (Galatians 1:1-2:10)

Year	Reference	Paul's Life
c. 5 AD	Acts 22:3, 28; Phil 3:5	Birth (in Tarsus)
c. 15-20 AD	Acts 22:3	At Gamaliel's school
34AD	Acts 9:1-9; <i>Galatians 1:15, 17</i>	Conversion. Commission. Arabia
37AD	<i>Galatians 1:17</i> ; Acts 9:20-25	Returns to Damascus
	<i>Galatians 1:18</i> ; Acts 9:26-29	Goes to Jerusalem (Peter & James)
	<i>Galatians 1:21</i>	Goes to Syria and Cilicia
49AD	Acts 15:1; <i>Galatians 2:1-9</i>	Jerusalem Council with Barnabas
49 or 51AD	<i>Galatians 1:10, 15-16</i>	New motive, new life perspective

Here's a short, timeline of early events of Paul's life. I'd really encourage you to read and study Galatians. For now, let's look at Chap 1&2.

Summary of Key Elements - Paul

Key elements:	Galatians
• Met Jesus	1:1
• Prayed and sought God (in Arabia)	1:17
• Accountable to leaders (Peter & James)	1:18
• Tried out and tested; results (in Syria & Cilicia)	1:21
• Recognised by leaders (Apostles in Jerusalem)	2:1-2, 7
• Encouraged and supported by others (Barnabas, Titus)	2:1
• New motives and perspective (please God; chosen and called)	1:10, 15-16
• This took time+++++ (3yrs + 14yrs...)	



A summary of key elements in Paul's early life experience:

- Met Jesus 1:1
- Prayed and sought God (in Arabia) 1:17
- Accountable to leaders (Peter & James) 1:18
- Tried out and tested; results (in Syria & Cilicia) 1:21
- Recognised by leaders (Apostles in Jerusalem) 2:1-2, 7
- Encouraged and supported by others (Barnabas, Titus) 2:1
- New motives and perspective (please God; chosen and called) 1:10, 15-16
- This took time+++++ (3yrs + 14yrs...)

Discerning Our Contribution: More Examples

Who?	Reference	How?
Saul (Paul)	Acts 9:1-7 & 15; Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:8	Met Christ, commissioned to reach Gentiles
Disciples from Emmaus	Luke 24:13-34	Hearts burned
<i>Samuel</i>	<i>1 Samuel 3</i>	
<i>Jonah</i>	<i>Jonah 1</i>	
<i>Peter</i>	<i>John 21:15-17</i>	



Other examples

- Emmaus disciples

You might also like to look at:

- Samuel, (1 Samuel 3)
- Jonah, (Jonah 1) or
- Peter (John 21:15-17), etc.

Discerning Our Contribution: Remember

Comments	Reference
Deceitful heart & sinful nature	Jeremiah 17:9; Hosea 10:2; Romans 7:21-23
Test your motives	Galatians 6:1-10; 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 12:3
Arrogance	Proverbs 8: 13; John 7:18; 1 Corinthians 4:18-20;
Humility instead	2 Corinthians 12:20-21; Philippians 2:3-4
Doubts don't disqualify us	Matthew 28:17



However, Scripture also warns us to beware of our...

- Deceitful heart
- Sinful nature
- Motives
- Arrogance, pride
- We need humility.

Doubts DO NOT disqualify us - See Matthew 28:17

Discovering My Contribution

“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (Ephesians 4:16 NLT)

1. What are you good at?
2. What do other people say you are good at?
3. How is/does God use you currently?
4. How could God use you in future?



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The Bible likens our different roles and contributions to various parts of a human body that all need to work as one, and in submission of Jesus as the head of the body. Ephesians 4:16 NLT says:...

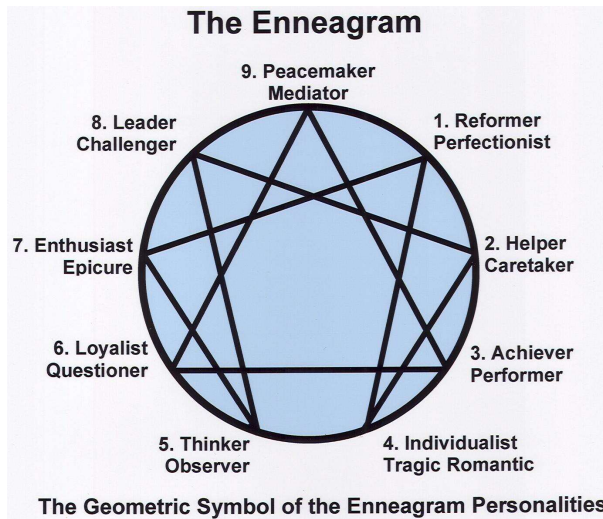
FOUR questions to consider:

1. What are you good at?
2. What do others say you are good at?
3. How is/does God use you currently?
4. How could God use you in the future?

Self-Assessment Tools...

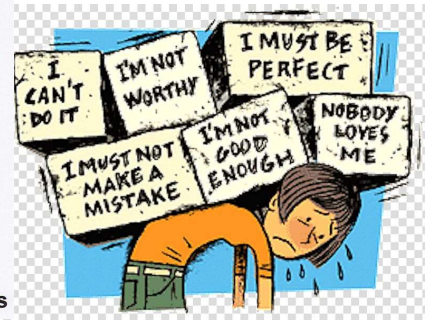
S.H.A.P.E.

(spiritual gifts;
heart; abilities;
personality;
experiences)



StrengthFinders™

VIA Character Strengths



<https://clipart-library.com/clipart/>

There are many different self-assessment tools available. Some are free, some charge for their insights. Here are some useful ones I can recommend:

- S.H.A.P.E.
- The Enneagram
- StrengthFinder
- VIA Character Strengths

References

- Love Life-Giving Water. (n.d.) *Understanding the Cycle of Grace*. Available at: <http://lovelifegivingwater.com/identity/understanding-the-cycle-of-grace/>
- Erik Rees (2021) *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*. Zondervan. Free online versions are available too.
- Richard Rohr & Andreas Ebert (2002) *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective*. New York: Crossroad. Various free Enneagram tests are available online.
- Tom Rath (2007) *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. Gallup Press. Book purchase includes online unlock key and access to ongoing input.
- VIA Character Strengths Available at: <https://www.viacharacter.org>



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